

# Religious offerings in the Linear B tablets: an attempt at their classification and some thoughts about their possible purpose\*

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## General introduction and methodological remarks

The extensive study of Mycenaean texts including terms of religion and cult following the decipherment of Linear B in 1952 gave considerable insights into this sphere of the culture and society of the Aegean Late Bronze Age.<sup>1</sup> Although these documents form a textual basis to the former ‘picture book without text’,<sup>2</sup> our understanding of many aspects of Mycenaean religion and cult is still insufficient and in many respects speculative. Due to the nature of these documents, which are records of the palace administration referring to particular aspects of the palace economy, there is no information relating directly to Mycenaean rituals or systems of belief. In addition, since these documents are written from the point of view of the palatial bureaucracy, they only include information about the official level of religion which refer to ‘official cults’ or ‘state cults’.<sup>3</sup>

Some knowledge of the religious behaviour of the Mycenaeans is provided by these written documents merely insofar as economic processes necessary for the transaction of cult practices were recorded by the central administration. The main source of our information derives from lists of disbursements to gods or sanctuaries on the one hand and from lists of either allocations to or contributions by individuals and regional centres within the scope of sacrificial banquets or other religious festivals on the other. Moreover, some further information can be drawn from texts

\* If not otherwise stated, translations of ancient authors are taken from the Loeb editions. I am deeply indebted to José García Ramón, Stefan Hiller, John Killen and Marie Louise Nosch for their valuable comments and many excellent suggestions for changes and improvements.

1. Among the vast amount of literature on this topic the following recapitulatory studies may be emphasized: W.K.C. Guthrie, «Early Greek Religion in the Light of the Decipherment of Linear B», *BICS* 4, 1959, pp. 35-46. L. Baumbach, «The Mycenaean Contribution to the Study of Greek Religion in the Bronze Age», *SMEA* 20, 1979, pp. 143-160. J. Chadwick, «What Do We Know about Mycenaean Religion?», *Linear B*, pp. 191-202. St. Hiller, «Mycenaean religion and cult», in: Y. Duhoux & A. Morpurgo Davies (eds), *A Companion to Linear B. Mycenaean Greek Texts and Their World*, vol. II, Louvain-la-Neuve 2011, pp. 169-211.
2. M.P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion*, Lund 1950, p. 7.
3. R. Hägg, «Official and Popular Cults in Mycenaean Greece», *Sanctuaries and Cults*, pp. 35-40.

mentioning gods as owners of property (land, livestock or industrial workers)<sup>4</sup> and from dignitaries whose titles reflect activities they performed in connection with religious ceremonial on records listing palace personnel, subsistence rations or land-holdings.<sup>5</sup>

In the following, I will focus upon texts dealing with deliveries to deities and cult places i.e. upon texts recording religious offerings in a narrower sense. These documents include names of deities, sanctuaries, cult places, festivals and month-names, sometimes titles of priests or other religious personnel. The following entries may be mentioned within such texts. However, due to the stenographic nature of the documents, they never appear together:

- a) A specification of a date, indicated for the most part by a month-name (e.g. KN Fp(1) 5: *di-wi-jo-jo me-no*)
- b) A name of a festival (e.g. PY Fr 1217: *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*)
- c) A recipient in the dative, indicated frequently by a god's name (e.g. KN Fp(1) 5: *pa-si-te-o-i, qe-ra-si-ja*)
- d) A sanctuary or cult-place, in many cases in the allative (e.g. PY Fr 1217: *pa-ki-ja-na-de*)
- e) An adjective describing a special quality of the offering or indicating the purpose to which it is to be put (e.g. PY Fr 1217: *pa-ko-we, we-ja-re-pe*)
- f) An offering, indicated virtually always by a logogram (e.g. PY Fr 1217: *OLE+A, e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo*)
- g) A quantity (e.g. KN Fp(1) 5: S 1)

#### KN Fp(1) 5

- .1 *di-wi-jo-jo* 'me-no' *qe-ra-si-ja* OLE S 1
- .2 *pa-si-te-o-i* OLE S 1

#### PY Fr 1217

- .1 *e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo*, *pa-ko-we*, *we-ja-re-pe*]
- .2 *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*
- .3 *pa-ki-ja-na-de* OLE+A v 1

4. St. Hiller, «Die mykenische Tempelwirtschaft», *AfO Beiheft* 19, 1982, pp. 94-104. S. Lupack, «Palaces, Sanctuaries, and Workshops», in: M.L. Galaty & W.A. Parkinson (eds), *Rethinking Mycenaean Palaces. New Interpretations of an Old Idea*, Los Angeles 1999, pp. 25-34. S. Lupack, «Deities and Religious Personnel as Collectors», in: M. Perna (ed), *Fiscality in Mycenaean and Near Eastern Archives*, Napoli 2006, pp. 89-108. J. Weilhartner, «Die Rolle der Heiligtümer in der mykenischen Palastwirtschaft: Eine Neubewertung der Textevidenz», in: P. Carlier et al. (eds), *Palatial Economy in the Ancient Near East and in the Aegean. First Steps Towards a Comprehensive Study and Analysis. Acts of the ESF Exploratory Workshop, Sèvres, 16-19 September 2010* (in press).
5. E.g. J.-P. Olivier, *A propos d'une 'liste' de desservants de sanctuaire dans les documents en linéaire B de Pylos*, Bruxelles 1960.

Month-names and names of festivals seem to appear exclusively within a religious context and thus act as a pointer to a religious interpretation of a text or of a whole set.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, such terms are not mentioned very often. The other types of entries can be found on those tablets which refer to purely economic transactions as well. Thus, in many cases one cannot be sure if the transaction belongs to the religious sphere or not due to the fact of a disputable interpretation of the recipient. Additionally, at least according to the texts, there are no certain examples of commodities exclusively destined for religious offerings. All of the items recorded within a religious context appear also as common foodstuffs (oil, honey, grain etc) or as ordinary commodities (wool, perfumed oil etc) in a purely secular context.<sup>7</sup> In some cases the belonging to a set, the find-place or the scribal hand of a tablet can help with the interpretation of a document. However, a final judgment cannot always be met.

Therefore, due to the limited evidence of the Linear B tablets and the lack of any other contemporary religious texts, definite conclusions about the belief system of Mycenaean religion cannot be drawn. However, we can try to go beyond the plain statement that the purpose of a transaction recorded on a tablet belongs to a religious or a purely economic sphere if various factors are taken into consideration. Paying attention to (a) the quantities and the combination of the commodities listed,<sup>8</sup> (b) the non-epigraphical evidence of Mycenaean religion<sup>9</sup> i.e. material remains (cult buildings, altars, ritual vessels, figurines, sacrificial tools etc), remnants of offerings (carbonized animal bones and seeds etc) as well as pictorial representations on frescoes, vessels, seals, rings etc, and (c) parallels from the religion of the historical period<sup>10</sup> we may be able to gain some knowledge about

6. J. Weilhartner, *Mykenische Opfergaben nach Aussage der Linear B-Texte*, Wien 2005, pp. 98f. 182f.

7. Despite one possible exception of the rule by the commodity FAR, most likely flour, a religious interpretation of a text should not be based on the nature of an item, as has been done e.g. by L.R. Palmer, «Studies in Mycenaean Religion», in: P. Händel & W. Meid (eds), *Festschrift für Robert Muth*, Innsbruck 1983, pp. 284-286. However, since some of the commodities listed on the tablets make regular appearances on religious records (e.g. CYP+O or HORD), they may indicate a religious purpose of a text if other features consistent with a religious context also occur cf. J.T. Killen, «Thoughts on the Functions of the New Thebes Tablets», *Neuen Theben*, pp. 84-86.

8. What has been said in the previous note about the nature of the commodities is equally true for small quantities and the combination of certain commodities. Although they are not a proof of a religious context in themselves they may argue in favour of a religious interpretation of a text if other features consistent with a religious context also occur. In any event, small amounts are a marked characteristic of some kinds of religious texts cf. Killen, *supra* n. 7, pp. 82-84.

9. Cf. e.g. R. Hägg, «Mycenaean Religion: The Helladic and the Minoan Components», *Linear B*, pp. 203-225. R. Hägg, «The Religion of the Mycenaeans twenty-four Years after the 1967 Mycenological Congress in Rome», *Atti Roma-Napoli II*, pp. 599-612.

10. In spite of the many differences between the Mycenaean world and the later Greek, there is some probability of a certain degree of continuity in the religious sphere due to the fact "that religion has exceptional powers of survival, as can be observed in Greece even after the advent of Christianity" as Guthrie, *supra* n. 1, p. 36 has convincingly stated. See also A. Heubeck, *Aus der Welt der früh-griechischen Lineartafeln*, Göttingen 1966, p. 97: „Es ist eine allorten zu beobachtende Tatsache, daß sich religiöse Vorstellungen und kultische Gewohnheiten über Zeiten politischer Umbrüche, sozialer Strukturveränderungen, kultureller Katastrophen mit beträchtlicher Zähigkeit zu halten

actual Mycenaean cult practice. This has clearly been shown by the interpretation of numerous sealings and tablets from Thebes, Pylos, and Knossos as being concerned with the supply of animals and mixed foodstuffs for sacrifice and state-organised banquets. Since there has been a lot written about the textual evidence relating to Mycenaean feasting over the last two decades,<sup>11</sup> I will confine myself to some more general remarks on this subject.

### State-organised sacrificial banqueting and other festivals

The term ‘state-organised banqueting’ was first used by John Killen in 1994<sup>12</sup> and refers to festivals held at palatial centres as well as in outlying areas organised by the palatial administration and assembling a large number of individuals, amongst them both the elite and lower classes of the population as the assumed high number of participants suggests. Mycenologists and archaeologists have examined the nature of such events which left their marks in written documents, in archaeological remains, and in iconographic evidence.<sup>13</sup> These ceremonies obviously played a major factor within Mycenaean society by helping to create a feeling of unification for the inhabitants of palatial territories.<sup>14</sup> In addition, as in other comparable societies, Mycenaean feasting is widely regarded as a demonstration of the generosity and piety of the palace as well as a means of reinforcing the power of central authority and securing the loyalty of the subordinate elites.<sup>15</sup>

The important role of the state-organised sacrificial banqueting is clearly reflected in the large number of relevant documents and by the meticulous recording of the preparations for the feasting activities. The scribes list sacrificial animals and mixed foodstuffs sent from major palace officials and individuals of lower status

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vermögen, daß ehrwürdige Kultstätten ihre Existenz und Relevanz sogar über mehrmaligen ethnischen Wechsel hinweg in ungebrochener Tradition bewahren“.

11. Ch. Piteros, J.-P. Olivier & J.L. Melena, «Les inscriptions en linéaire B des nodules de Thèbes (1982)», *BCH* 114, 1990, pp. 103-184. J.T. Killen, «Observations on the Thebes Sealings», *Mykenaiika*, pp. 365-380. J.T. Killen, «Thebes Sealings, Knossos Tablets and Mycenaean State Banquets», *BICS* 39, 1994, pp. 67-84. L. Godart, «Les sacrifices d’animaux dans les textes mycéniens», *Floreat Studia Mycenaea*, vol. I, pp. 249-254. P. Halstead, «Texts, Bones and Herders: Approaches to Animal Husbandry in Late Bronze Age Greece», *A-na-go-ta*, tables 1-4. J. Weilhartner, «Kultische Festbankette im mykenischen Pylos», in: B. Asamer et al. (eds), *Temenos. Festgabe für F. Felten und St. Hiller*, Wien 2002, pp. 45-52. T.G. Palaima, «Sacrificial Feasting in the Linear B Documents», *Hesperia* 73, 2004, pp. 217-246. L.M. Bendall, «Fit For a King? Hierarchy, Exclusion, Aspiration and Desire in the Social Structure of Mycenaean Banqueting», in: P. Halstead & J.C. Barrett (eds), *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece*, Oxford 2004, pp. 105-135. J. Bennet, «Representations of Power in Mycenaean Pylos», in: F. Lang, C. Reinholdt & J. Weilhartner (eds), *ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΟΣ. Festschrift für Stefan Hiller zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wien 2007, pp. 11-22. J. Weilhartner, «Some Observations on the Commodities in the Linear B Tablets Referring to Sacrificial Banquets», in *Dais*, pp. 411-426.
12. Killen, *supra* n. 11, 1994, p. 70.
13. J.C. Wright (ed), *The Mycenaean Feast*, Princeton 2004 (*Hesperia* 73.2). P. Halstead & J.C. Barrett (eds), *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece*, Oxford 2004 (*Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology* 5). *Dais*.
14. Palaima, *supra* n. 11, pp. 217f.
15. Killen, *supra* n. 11, 1994, pp. 70f.

as well as palatial distributions for feasts at regional centres. In addition, they seem to record banqueting paraphernalia, as the list of various kinds of vessels, fire and cooking equipment, elaborately decorated furniture, and sacrificial implements in the PY Ta series implies.

Usually, these banquets are related to a more or less religious context. Whether they were also held to celebrate mere secular events serving a political purpose is a matter not finally settled yet. However, since animals play an essential role within the provision for these banquets it seems tempting to suggest that these feasts resembled the pattern of sacrificial banquets in later Greek history involving the ritual slaughter of the animal, dedicated to a god, and followed by a sacral meal in a communal feasting. In historical times, virtually all meat consumed by the Greeks was derived from the ritual of animal sacrifice,<sup>16</sup> and in my opinion it is very likely that this equally was the case in Late Bronze Age Greece – at least within the official level of religion that is reflected in the Linear B records.<sup>17</sup>

Issues of non-animal foodstuffs in small quantities, as recorded on the PY Fn series, supplied to both male and female recipients referred to by their name, their title or trade-name presumably form the basis of another kind of festival.<sup>18</sup> These festivals seem to have lasted several days and their participants were obviously of some importance since the entry of an individual by his personal name within Linear B records is a mark of considerable distinction. Besides the contributions of food to persons participating in these religious performances, provisions are sent to cult places or shrines, deities and priests. The great majority of the tablets discovered at Thebes between 1993 and 1995 may belong to this type of texts,<sup>19</sup> though others regard the allocations on these tablets as purely secular in character.<sup>20</sup>

## Offerings to gods

Besides organising and supplying provisions for large-scale communal banquets and festivals, there were also other religious obligations which Mycenaean palaces had to fulfil. The palaces were responsible for religious offerings, including expendable commodities such as honey or oil (which is sometimes perfumed) as well as durable items such as textiles. Although the documents do not tell us *expressis verbis* which items are offerings destined for a deity (i.e. where human use is forbidden) and which are commodities ultimately for the benefit of priestly

16. P. Stengel, *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer*, München <sup>3</sup>1920, pp. 105f. M. Detienne, «Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice», in: M. Detienne & J.-P. Vernant (eds), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, Chicago 1989, pp. 1-20.
17. J. Weilhartner, «Zu den Opfertieren innerhalb der Linear B-Texte: Mögliche Hinweise für Brand- und Schlachtopfer», *Colloquium Romanum*, vol. II, pp. 807-813.
18. J.T. Killen, «Religion at Pylos. The Evidence of the Fn Tablets», *Potnia*, pp. 435-443.
19. A. Sacconi, «Les repas sacrés dans les textes mycéniens», *Potnia*, pp. 467-470. Killen, *supra* n. 7, pp. 81-103.
20. Cf. e.g. T.G. Palaima, «*de-go-no, po-ro-de-go-no, ko-ro* and *si-to* as Food for Thought», paper read at the conference and his reviews of *Thèbes I* in *Minos* 35-36, 2000-2001, pp. 475-486, *AJA* 107, 2003, pp. 113-115 and *Kadmos* 42, 2003, pp. 31-38.

personnel or for the maintenance of a sanctuary, there seems to be some evidence for the recording of offerings that are intended to be given directly to the gods.

### 1. Evidence for libations<sup>21</sup>

The sets Fp(1), Gg(1) and Gg(3) from Knossos are characterized by the recording of modest quantities of olive oil and honey, by the frequent appearance of month-names and, above all, by the large number of deities and cult places referred to on these tablets. In fact, it is on these records where most of our information on Mycenaean month-names occurs. The distinctive features of these texts are emphasised by their particular find-place. In the Clay Chest (A) as well as in the Gallery of Jewel Fresco (G1) only tablets recording religious offerings were found.<sup>22</sup>

A closely parallel series of offerings is represented by the Fr tablets from Pylos as the large number of known deities, cult places, and other obviously religious terms among the recipients of perfumed oil as well as the correspondences in the oil quantities imply.<sup>23</sup> In addition, one certain month-name (*pa-ki-ja-ni-jo-jo me-no*) and several terms which have been interpreted as festival names (*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*, *re-ke-e-to-ro-te-ri-jo*, *me-tu-wo ne-wo*) are also attested in this series.

The possible purpose of these offerings has rarely been considered in detail. More often than not the interpretation was limited to the plain statement that the recorded items were used for cult purposes or for the daily maintenance of the sanctuaries' personnel. As regards the oil logogram within set Fp(1) which seems to resemble in many cases the form of this sign with ligatured *we* found at both Pylos and Mycenae, John Chadwick supposed that the olive oil on these tablets was used for ritual anointing, assuming that *we* represents an abbreviation of *we-ja-re-pe* (interpreted by him as 'for anointing').<sup>24</sup> Along with this assumption other cursory explanations of the purpose of these allocations of oil have been proposed, among them 'oiling wooden statues' or 'lighting, anointing, consumption'.<sup>25</sup>

21. Cf. J. Weilhartner, «Oil and Honey on Some of the Linear B Offering Tablets from Knossos. Considerations about Their Possible Application», *JPR* 16-17, 2003, pp. 46f.

22. However, it should be noted that R.J. Firth, «A Review of the Find-Places of the Linear B Tablets from the Palace of Knossos», *Minos* 35-36, 2000-2001, pp. 233-237 has suggested that the tablets from the find-place G1 should be associated with the tablets from G2, E3, and H4 where non-religious tablets were found as well.

23. This, at least, applies to the tablets found in Room 23, an oil store-room behind the megaron. However, since the Fr tablets do not form a homogeneous set but rather a number of sets, some of the quantities disbursed may not be destined for religious purposes. Some of the records found in Room 32 and 38 are, at any rate, clearly inventory records cf. C. Shelmerdine, *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos*, Göteborg 1985, pp. 63-106.

24. J. Chadwick, «The Olive Oil Tablets of Knossos», *Cambridge Colloquium*, pp. 26-28. However, at the same colloquium, Emmett Bennett has doubted this assumption cf. E.L. Bennett, «Miscellaneous Observations on the Forms and Identities of Linear B Ideograms», *Cambridge Colloquium*, p. 17: "I am inclined to believe that the reversed-S-shaped forms in KN 1 (i.e. KN Fp(1) 1) are simply one scribe's more elaborate version of the normal sign, and that no intention of marking the sign by *we* in ligature is present." I owe this reference to John Killen, *per litteras* who argues for Bennett's view.

25. L. Baumbach, «Further Thoughts on the Knossos Fp Series», *Colloquium Mycenaicum*, p. 203.

In regard to the purpose of honey recorded within the KN Gg series, so far no theories have been suggested.

An important clue to the possible use of the two liquids oil and honey may lie in the fact that on the three sets from Knossos all recipients of the allocations – with the exception of *a-ne-mo-i-je-re-ja*, the priestess of the Winds<sup>26</sup> – can be identified as deities or sanctuaries. This stands in obvious contrast with other tablets from Knossos referring to allocations of oil and honey on which – along with religious recipients and cult places – individuals and groups referred to by their (religious) titles, trade-names or personal names appear (e.g. Fp(2) or Fh series).<sup>27</sup> The religious exclusiveness of the recipients in the three sets under discussion therefore may imply a special use of the commodities listed. If one considers that the distinctive features of these sets lie in the direct offering of the liquids to the respective deities the custom of libation may be assumed i.e. the pouring of a liquid as an offering to a divine recipient – either poured out of relatively small vessels in a controlled manner (σπονδή) or of larger vessels emptied in a single blow (χοή).<sup>28</sup>

Libations were very common amongst Indo-Europeans as well as amongst Bronze Age civilizations of the Aegean-Mediterranean world.<sup>29</sup> Along with processions, animal sacrifice and communal feasting, this ritual is regarded to belong to the most important cult practices of Mycenaean official cult and is one of the best attested cult practices of Mycenaean ritual from the Shaft Grave period onwards.<sup>30</sup> The archaeological evidence for libations primary consists of implements obviously designed for the ceremonial pouring of a liquid (i.e. rhyta and libation jugs) or for receiving a liquid (i.e. tripod offering tables, which evidently served this purpose).<sup>31</sup> Though of Minoan origin, these cult implements were common on the Greek mainland as well. In addition, the custom of libation is implied by several devices which seem to have served to receive liquids at the

26. The reason for that may lie in the extraordinary nature of these deities.

27. Cf. Weilhartner, *supra* n. 6, pp. 26-28 and 34-40 for more details.

28. This differentiation has been proposed by W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, Stuttgart 1977, pp. 121f. However, other differentiations have been suggested as well e.g. σπονδαί to the gods and χοαί to the dead. For an elaborate discussion of these terms cf. J. Casabona, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en Grec des origines à la fin de l'époque classique*, Aix-en-Provence 1966, pp. 231-268; 279-298.

29. Burkert, *supra* n. 28, pp. 121-125.

30. R. Hägg, «The Role of Libations in Mycenaean Ceremony and Cult», *Celebrations*, p. 177. Hägg, *supra* n. 9, *Atti Roma-Napoli II*, p. 610. The evidence for libation within Minoan religion is discussed by N. Marinatos, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual*, Stockholm 1986, pp. 25-32.

31. Hägg, *supra* n. 9, *Linear B*, p. 210. Hägg, *supra* n. 30, *Celebrations*, pp. 183f. A thorough study of the various types and uses of rhyta has recently been published by R. Koehl, *Aegean Bronze Age Rhyta*, Philadelphia 2006. Along with the beak-spouted jug, the rhyton forms the core of the Aegean libation set. Although these jugs often occur in pictorial representations of libation scenes they were rarely found *in corpore* at Cretan and mainland sites. The tripod offering tables which occasionally were found with rhyta and evidently served as a receptacle for liquids obviously form another element of the libation set cf. Koehl, *passim*. A list of tripod offering tables can be found in N. Polychronakou-Sgouritsa, «Μυκηναϊκές τριποδικές τράπεζες προσφορών», *ArchEph* 121, 1982, pp. 20-33.

Cult Centre and in the porch of the megaron of the palace at Mycenae as well as at Asine, Berbati, and Ayios Konstantinos.<sup>32</sup> Besides a tripod offering table made of clay with two miniature kylikes found on it next to the central hearth in the megaron at the Palace of Pylos, a further example of this kind of installation seems to have existed to the right of the throne (fig. 1): the narrow channel in a slightly curving line between two roughly circular, shallow depressions in the floor is usually taken as an installation for the pouring of liquids on ceremonial occasions performed by the king while sitting on the throne.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, a fresco fragment with the depiction of a stone jug found in this area was interpreted by Mabel Lang as part of the king's libation equipment.<sup>34</sup> However, in regard to tablet PY Fr 1235 on which *wa-na-ka-te* appears as a recipient of oil next to *po-ti-ni-ja* one may wonder if these libations were not performed by the king but were performed in honour of him.<sup>35</sup>

### PY Fr 1235

- .1 wa-]na-so-i , wa-na-ka-te , pa-ḱo[-we ]OLE+PA 1
- .2 ]wə-na-so-i , po-ti-ni-ja , pa-ko-we OLE+PA v 3

32. Hägg, *supra* n. 30, *Celebrations*, pp. 178-181. E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, «New Evidence for the Practice of Libations», *Potnia*, pp. 213-217.
33. *PofN* I, pp. 85f. Hägg, *supra* n. 30, *Celebrations*, p. 178.
34. *PofN* II, p. 195.
35. St. Hiller, «*wa-na-so-i to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*», *Minos* 10, 1969, pp. 83-85. P. Carlier, «*wa-na-ka* derechef. Nouvelles réflexions sur les royautés mycéniennes», *BCH* 122, 1998, p. 414. E. Stavrianopoulou, «Die Verflechtung des Politischen mit dem Religiösen im mykenischen Pylos», *Politeia*, p. 429. In his paper Stefan Hiller suggests that *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* may represent \*θρονοεχκτήριον/θρονοεκχεντήριον, 'eine am Thron vollzogene Libationsspende.' Although this transcription, first proposed by L.A. Stella, «Le iscrizioni Pilie 1955 nel quadro della civiltà micenea», *PP* 67, 1959, p. 256 and G. Pugliese Carratelli, «Aspetti e problemi della monarchia micenea», *PP* 69, 1959, p. 418 (interpreted as 'l'unzione del trono'), agrees perfectly with the archaeological remains of the megaron of Pylos, it would imply an omission of -u- which, from a linguistic point of view, poses a severe problem. However, at times a graphic omission of -u- or a morphological/phonetic variation without -u- is attested (e.g. *ke-u-po-da/ke-po-da*, *we-u-da-ne-we/we-da-ne-we*, *qo-u-qo-ta/qo-qo-ta-o*, *e-re-u-te-ri-ja/e-re-te-ri-ja*). In any case, an interpretation of this term as \*θρονοεκκτήριον 'the holding of the throne' or \*θρονοεκχκτήριον 'the drawing of the throne' seems preferable cf. *DMic* II, s.v. A summary of these and various other suggestions has recently been provided by V.P. Petrakis, «*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* reconsidered», *Minos* 37-38, 2002-2003, pp. 293-316 who argues for \*θρονοεκκτήριον 'on the occasion of (ritual) holding/bearing of flowers/herbs'. Cf. I.K. Probonas, ἡ μυκηναϊκή ἑορτὴ \*θρονοεκκτήρια (*to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo*) καὶ ἐπιβίωσις αὐτῆς εἰς τοὺς ἱστορικοὺς χρόνους, Athens 1974, pp. 32-61 who takes *to-no-* as \*θρόνον with the meaning 'embroidered garment'. However, due to its appearance in the PY Ta series, it seems more plausible to take *to-no* as θρόνος 'throne' and not as \*θρόνον (either 'herb' or 'garment'). On the relationship between the wanaks and the throne cf. J. Maran & E. Stavrianopoulou, «Πόρνιος Ἀνήρ. Reflections on the Ideology of Mycenaean Kingship», in: E. Alram-Stern & G. Nightingale (eds), *Keimelion: Elitenbildung und elitärer Konsum von der mykenischen Palastzeit bis zur homerischen Epoche*, Wien 2007, pp. 287-290. The throne is also involved in the royal liturgy of Ugaritic cult, cf. G. del Olmo Lete, «Royal Aspects of the Ugaritic Cult», in: J. Quagebeur (ed), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the International Conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 17-20, April 1991*, Leuven 1993, p. 64f.





**Figure 1.** Palace of Pylos, Throne Room: place of the throne and installation for libations  
(after *PofN* I.2, pl. 70).

In Mycenaean iconography, a clear libation scene is indicated on the Tiryns gold ring showing a procession of four ‘Genii’ with libation jugs and a vessel (interpreted either as a rhyton or, perhaps more likely, as a chalice) held by a female robed figure seated on a throne (fig. 2). This representation can be compared to a seal from Naxos which, according to Robert Koehl,<sup>36</sup> shows the standard equipment of an Aegean libation ceremony (fig. 3): a conical rhyton and a beak-spouted vessel for pouring a liquid are depicted above a tripod object to catch the liquid. Another example is the well-known representation of a woman dressed in a hide skirt pouring the contents of a vessel into a larger jar on the limestone sarcophagus of Hagia Triada (fig. 4). More iconographic evidence for the performance of libations may lie behind the procession frescoes found at several sites, since it has been suggested that the act of carrying vessels implies libations to a deity.<sup>37</sup>

As to the commodities oil and honey, it is consistent with our considerations that ancient authors refer to the pouring of scented oil and honey as to the oldest forms of worship: according to Theophrastus, next to libations of water, libations of

36. Koehl, *supra* n. 31, pp. 256f.

37. L. Kontorli-Papadopoulou, *Aegean Frescoes of Religious Character*, Göteborg 1996, pp. 137-140.



Fig. 2. Gold ring from Tiryns (after CMS I, 179).



Fig. 3. Seal from Naxos (after CMS V, 608).

oil (ἐλαιόσπονδα) and libations of honey (μελίσπονδα) belong to the τὰ μὲν ἀρχαῖα τῶν ἱερῶν νηφάλια (*apud* Porph. *Abst.* 2.20 cf. Emp. fr. 128 DK). The pouring of honey as a drink-offering to a divine recipient may also be linked to the idea that honey was seen as food for the gods (Porph. *Antr.* 16).

Honey regularly occurs as an item of the offerings of the first fruits (see below; e.g. Soph. fr. 366. Paus. 8,42,11). However, in the event of being donated as a separate offering, the performance of a libation is explicitly stated in many cases. This is documented both by inscriptions (*IG* XII, 5,2,1027: βομῶς Διὸς Ε[νδένδ]ρο - - μέλιτι σπένδεται) and by quotations in Classical literature (Ath. 15,693e: παρὰ δὲ τοῖς Ἑμεσηνοῖς θύοντες τῷ Ἥλιῳ [...] μέλι σπένδουσιν). As regards the olive oil, its use for performing libations was common practice in later Greek ritual.<sup>38</sup> It

38. C. Mayer, *Das Öl im Kultus der Griechen*, Würzburg 1917, pp. 25-71.



Fig. 4. Sarcophagus from Hagia Triada, detail of side A  
(after Immerwahr, *supra* n. 58, pl. 50).

is connected with the ritual of animal sacrifice (e.g. *SIG* 1026, 22-25: Ἀθαναί[αι] Μαχα[νί]δι δάμαλις κριτὰ ... [νύ]στρα δίδεται τῷ θεῷ ἐλαί[ου] τέτορες κοτυλέαι, ... *IG* XI.2, 144,30: εἰς ἱεροπότον ἐλαίου χοῦς) as well as with offerings of the first fruits, next to honey and other comestible goods (e.g. Paus. 8,42,11). Moreover, it frequently appears in funerary contexts (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 23,170).

As has been stated above, the conspicuous mentioning of deities and sanctuaries as recipients of offerings throughout the sets Fp(1), Gg(1) and Gg(3) from Knossos and the modest amounts of the recorded liquids allow the interpretation that these commodities were offered to the gods directly i.e. that they were offered completely without immediate gain for the human donors, a custom that was common practice in antiquity. The special features of these sets, the nature of the commodities, the archaeological evidence of Mycenaean Greece and the evidence of written sources from Classical antiquity seem to point to offerings made in form of libations.

## 2. Evidence for votive offerings

### a) Offerings of unguents

Whether some of the disbursements of oil listed within the PY Fr series were actually dedicated by the way of a libation cannot be proven but I would at least include this practice as a possible ritual use of some of the oil allocated on these tablets.<sup>39</sup> Be that as it may, within this series from Pylos there is an explicit reference to a

39. This has rarely been considered. E.g. Shelmerdine, *supra* n. 23, pp. 123-128, who describes various ritual uses of oil, among them anointing statues and its use in funerary contexts (as grave gifts and for preparation of a body for a burial), does not refer explicitly to libations. As regards the allocations to *di-pi-si-jo-i*, this term has been interpreted as the dead ('the thirsty ones') demanding libations on their tombs cf. Guthrie, *supra* n. 1, pp. 45f. or as name for the 'Genii' cf. S. Marinatos, «Πολυδῆμιον Ἀργος», *Cambridge Colloquium*, pp. 265-267. However, these interpretations of the graph *di-pi-si-jo-i* are highly speculative.

particular offering custom: the dedication of 9.6 l oil (*e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo/\*ἐλαιFov*) to the *po-ti-ni-ja u-po-jo* as an unguent for textiles (*we-a<sub>2</sub>-no-i a-ro-pa/F* ἐχάνοις ἄλοιφά).

### PY Fr 1225

- .1 e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo , u-po-jo , po-ti-ni-ja
- .2 we-a<sub>2</sub>-no-i , a-ro-pa OLE+A s 1

Cynthia Shelmerdine has linked this practice of anointing textiles, which seems to be a regular Mycenaean practice beyond the religious sector,<sup>40</sup> with Homeric references to ‘shining’ and ‘fragrant’ cloth verbalized by a number of different adjectives. She refers also to Bronze Age Mari texts, where quotations of ‘(sesame)-oil to make cloth shine’ show the purpose of this treatment of woollen and linen clothes *expressis verbis*.<sup>41</sup> Additional evidence for this practice may be seen in allocations of oil designated as *we-(j)a-re-pe* (Fr 1205, 1215, 1217, 1218, 1223) to clearly (*pa-ki-ja-na-de, po-ro-wi-to*) or at least arguably religious recipients (*a-pi-qo-ro-i, ti-no-de, wa-na-ke-te*) if the interpretation as \*Fεσ-αλειφής (suitable for anointing garments) is valid.<sup>42</sup> A pointer to this assumption may be provided by the reading *we-ja-re-pe* OLE+A on the *recto originalis* of Fr 1225 which was replaced by *we-a<sub>2</sub>-no-i a-ro-pa* and may therefore be explained as a similar expression of the same matter.<sup>43</sup> However, other proposals have been made.<sup>44</sup>

Regardless the interpretation of the term *we-(j)a-re-pe*, a couple of instances where one and the same religious term denotes a recipient of oil and of one or more

40. This assumption is based on many records of allocations of oil to individuals occupied with the fabrication of textiles as well as to places known to be centres of wool production or textile manufacture. Although the purpose of these allocations of oil is not specified, the nature of the tablets suggest a direct link of the disbursements with the domain of the recipient cf. C.W. Shelmerdine, «Shining and Fragrant Cloth in Homeric Epic», in: J.B. Carter & S.P. Morris (eds), *The Ages of Homer. A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule*, Austin 1995, p. 103 and n. 29. Comparable to the references within the KN Fh series listed by Shelmerdine, tablet MY Fo 101 shows similar disbursements of OLE+WE to women workers engaged within the textile industry cf. J.T. Killen, «Some Puzzles in a Mycenaean Personnel Record», *ZA* 31, 1981, pp. 38-41. However, as Marie-Louise Nosch and John Killen reminded me, the disbursements of oil on this tablet from Mycenae are more likely to be seen as intended for personal use (JTK) and are perhaps taken as salaries (MLN).

41. C.W. Shelmerdine, «From Mycenae to Homer: The Next Generation», *Atti Roma-Napoli*, pp. 468-470. Shelmerdine, *supra* n. 40, pp. 99-107.

42. E.L. Bennett, *The Olive Oil Tablets of Pylos*, Salamanca 1958, pp. 20-22. However, as Bennett points out, the interpretation of the first element *we-* as \*Fεσ- seems appropriate only for the spelling *we-a-re-pe*, whereas the alternative spelling *we-ja-re-pe* poses a problem for this interpretation. Nevertheless, he tentatively accepts the reading \*Fεσ-αλειφής as ‘hypothetical interpretation’. Cf. A.L.H. Robkin, «The Endogram WE on Mycenaean Textiles \*146 and \*166+WE: A Proposed Identification», *AJA* 85, 1981, p. 213, who links the endogram WE in \*146 and \*166+WE with the term *we-ja-re-pe* and regards these logograms as referring to oil treated textiles. However, the assumption that WE within these logograms stands for \*we-a<sub>2</sub>-no(-i) is perhaps more likely cf. M.-L. Nosch & M. Perna, «Cloth in the Cult», *Potnia*, p. 471 and n. 4.

43. Bennett, *supra* n. 42, p. 56: “But at least this possibility of partial equivalence of the expressions could lend some support to the interpretation of *we-(j)a-re-pe* as a compound of \*wes- with \*alei-*phes*.”

44. E.g. \*ὑ-αλειφής (‘for anointing’) cf. *DMic* II, s.v.

textile(s) may indicate that the practice of anointing textiles may be more common in the religious sector than has been previously considered. Although some of these correspondences rely on readings with varying degrees of certainty, the links between the Fr tablets on the one hand and the Mb/Mn tablets and Ua 1413 on the other hand seem to be too numerous to be mere coincidence.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the conspicuous associations between these two groups of tablets gain further support by the fact that the distribution of textiles as religious offerings was one of the main focus of the Southwestern Department as has been recently established by Cynthia Shelmerdine.<sup>46</sup>

<b>di-wi-jo-de</b>	OLE+A 1.6l	Fr 1230	<b>di-wi-jo</b>	*146 2	Mb 1366
			<b>?di-]wi-jo</b>	*146[ ]	Mb 1436
<b>e-re-de</b>	OLE+PA 1.6l	Fr 1228	<b>e-re-de</b>	[*146]	Mn 1411
<b>wa-na-so-i</b>			<b>wa]-na-so-i??</b>		
<b>ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro</b>	OLE+PA 4.8l	Fr 1226	<b>ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro</b>	*146 7	Ua 1413
<b>te-o-i</b>			<b>po-re-no-tu-te[</b>	*166+WE 1	
<b>ro-u-si-jo a-ko-ro</b>	OLE+PA 6.4l	Fr 1220	<b>ro-u-si]-jo a-ko-ro?</b>	[*146]	Mn 1411
			<b>ma-se-de</b>		
<b>?ro-u-]so-de</b>	OLE+A 4.8l	Fr 1207	<b>ro-u-so</b>	*146[ ]	Mb 1398
<b>?ro-u-]so-de</b>	OLE 9.6l	Fr 1238	<b>ro-u-şo</b>	[*146]	Mn 1370
<b>wa-na-ka-te</b>	OLE+PA 9.6l	Fr 1220	<b>?wa-]na-ka-te</b>	*146 5	Mb 1402
<b>di-pi-si-jo-i</b>					
<b>wa-na-ka-te</b>	[OLE]+A 11.2l	Fr 1227			
<b>wa-na-so-i</b>					
<b>wa-na-ka-te</b>	OLE+PA 28.8l	Fr 1235			
<b>wa-]na-so-i</b>					

Some further evidence for the practice of anointing textiles may lie behind the recording of textiles, wool and ointment next to each other within two ‘mixed commodity’ tablets of the PY Un series:

#### PY Un 6

.6 \*146 37 \*166+WE[ ]LANA 5  
.7 AREPA s 1 v 1[

#### PY Un 853

.3 \*146 18[ ] LANA 2 M 2[  
.4 AREPA v 4 [ ]1 OVIS<sup>m</sup> 1 OVIS<sup>f</sup> 1 ÇAṛ<sup>f</sup>[

45. All Fr tablets in table 1 were found in Room 23 except for Fr 1207 (Room 38). All other tablets belong to a department associated with the Southwestern Building cf. C.W. Shelmerdine, «The Southwestern Department at Pylos», *A-na-ko-ta*, pp. 309-337.

46. Shelmerdine, *supra* n. 45, pp. 325; 332-335.

Finally, this kind of oil treatment would gain considerable additional evidence if the fragmentary terms *pu*-[ on Fr 1355 and *e-pi*[ on Fr 1242 would denote the textile fabrics *pu-ka-ta-ri-ja*/\**πυκτάλια* (?) (cf. KN L(7) 471, 474; MY X 508) and *e-pi-ro-pa-ja*/\**ἐπιλωπαῖα* (cf. KN Od(1) 696). One of these two tablets, Fr 1242, belongs to the same find-place (Room 23) and is assigned to the same scribal hand (cii-S1217) as Fr 1225.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the term *a-ro-pa*/ἄλοιφά only appears on these three tablets within the Fr series may argue in favour of the proposed restorations, though “the link between them could simply be that they all record *a-ro-pa*, not *a-ro-pa* for anointing cloth”.<sup>48</sup> In any case, the proposed readings remain highly speculative.

### PY Fr 1225

- .1 e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo , u-po-jo , po-ti-ni-ja
- .2 we-a<sub>2</sub>-no-i , a-ro-pa OLE+A s 1

### PY Fr 1355

te-o-i , a-ro-pa , pu-[ OLE

### PY Fr 1242

- {.a a-ro-pa
- { e-ra<sub>3</sub>-wo , e-pi[ OLE

### b) Offerings of textiles

However the evidence discussed above is interpreted, the allocation of perfumed oil to a deity as an unguent for textiles on Fr 1225 naturally reminds one of religious offerings of textiles. This practice is well attested within the written documents as a couple of texts of the KN M and Oa series testifies (e.g. M(1) 1645; M 719, 724, 729; Oa 745, 1808). On these tablets two types of cloth (\*146, \*166+WE) are given to various deities. Furthermore, textiles are repeatedly recorded within the supplies for sacrificial banqueting (PY Un 2, 6, 853). Parallel to the textual evidence, there exists a fairly substantial amount of iconographic documentation for this practice on Bronze Age sealings and frescoes.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, faience ‘votive robes’ and ‘sacral knots’, which have also been linked to this practice, were found

47. *Scribes Pylos*, pp. 119-123. In addition, A.M. Jasink, «Le ‘tavolette dell’ olio’ di Pilo. Considerazioni topografiche», *Kadmos* 22, 1983, p. 50 assigns also tablet Fr 1355 tentatively to hand cii-S1217 and refers to it as a possible stray from Room 23. By contrast, T.G. Palaima, *Scribes Pylos*, p. 166 assumes that this tablet which is assigned to class ii “may be *in situ originali*” i.e. area west of Room 103.

48. John Killen, *per litteras*.

49. W.-D. Niemeier, «Zur Deutung des Thronraumes im Palast von Knossos», *AM* 101, 1986, pp. 78-81, fig. 3-8. L. Morgan, «Island Iconography: Thera, Kea, Milos», *TAW* III.1, pp. 260f., fig. 8-9. Kontorli-Papadopoulou, *supra* n. 37, pp. 142f. Most of these scenes have been interpreted as ritual dressings of a priestess and have been called a ‘robing ceremony’. Since it is assumed that during this ritual the priestess is transformed into a goddess, the ritual dressing seems to imply a dedication of the textile to the divinity cf. Marinatos, *supra* n. 30, pp. 58-61.

*in corpore*. While they have come to light mainly in Minoan Crete, some examples are from the mainland.<sup>50</sup>

Although the purpose of these textiles dedicated to deities is not explicitly stated, this practice seems to indicate a ritual which is attested in Greek literature as early as Homer or Alcman and which reminds one of the transfer of the newly woven peplos to the xoanon of Athena Polias during the festival Panathenaia.<sup>51</sup>

Hom. Il. 6.90-92: (...) πέπλον, ὅς οἱ δοκέει χαριέστατος ἥδὲ μέγιστος | εἶναι ἐνὶ  
μεγάρῳ καὶ οἱ πολλὸ φίλτατος αὐτῇ, | θεῖναι Ἀθηναίης ἐπὶ γούνασιν ἡυκόμοιο.

(...) the robe that seemed to her (i.e. the mother of Hector) the fairest and  
amplest in her hall, and that is far dearest to her own, this let her lay upon the  
knees of fair-haired Athene.

Alcm. Partheneion 1,60-63: ταὶ Πεληάδες γάρ ἄμιν | Ὀρθρία φᾶρος φεροίσαις |  
νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίαν ἄτε σήριον | ἄστρον ἄφ' ηρομέναι μάχονται.

For these Pleiades are rising in battle against us, who are carrying through the  
ambrosial night to Orthia (i.e. Artemis) a robe like the star Sirius.<sup>52</sup>

In this context, it seems appropriate to refer to a fresco fragment from Tiryns which has been considered by Christos Boulotis as a depiction of a cloth offering in connection with the carrying of a terracotta figurine (fig. 5). Stefan Hiller has associated this illustration with the term *te-o-po-ri-ja*/θεοφορία (interpreted as 'carrying of a god [in procession]') which appears next to a term denoting a textile (*e-pi-ro-pa-ja*) on KN Od(1) 696. The concordance between text and depiction seems in fact striking.<sup>53</sup>

### KN Od(1) 696

- .1 ]e-pi-ro-pa-ja , / o-du-we 'te-o-po-ri-ja' M 2[  
.2 ] LANA 2 M 1

50. Nilsson, *supra* n. 2, pp. 162-164. N. Marinatos, *Minoan Religion*, Columbia 1993, pp. 141-144. A summary of the iconographical and archaeological evidence has been provided by G.S. Korres, «Παραστάσεις προσφορᾶς ἱερῶς ἐσθῆτος καὶ ἱεροῦ πέπλου καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὰς προβλήματα καὶ συναφῇ ἔργα», in: *Πεπραγμένα του Δ' Διεθνούς Κρητολογικῆ Συνεδρίου* II, Athens 1981, pp. 659-688.
51. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste*, Berlin 1932, pp. 29-32. On the offering of textiles to deities in the historical period cf. F. Willemssen, *Frühe griechische Kultbilder*, Würzburg 1939, pp. 1-17.
52. J.M. Priestly, «The φᾶρος of Alcman's Partheneion 1», *Mnemosyne* 60, 2007, p. 194. The comparison of a fine robe (dedicated to a god) to a star is also attested in Hom. Il. 6.293-295.
53. C. Boulotis, «Zur Deutung des Freskofragments Nr. 103 aus der Tirynther Frauenprozession», *ArchKorrBl* 9, 1979, pp. 59-67. St. Hiller, «*te-o-po-ri-ja*», in: C.G. Glotz (ed), *Aux origines de l'hellénisme. La Crète et la Grèce. Hommage à Henri van Effenterre*, Paris 1984, pp. 139-150.

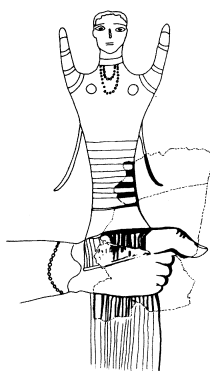


Fig. 5. Fragment no. 103 of women's frieze from Tiryns (after Immerwahr, *supra* n. 58, fig. 33b).

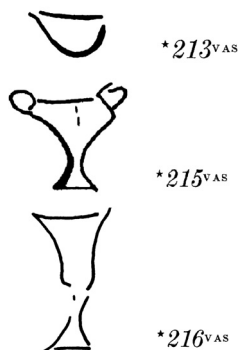


Fig. 6. Logograms \*213<sup>VAS</sup>, \*215<sup>VAS</sup>, \*216<sup>VAS</sup> (after IDA fig. 116, 138, 140).

Due to this textual and iconographic evidence, it seems most likely that the dedication of cloth as a votive offering was common Mycenaean cult practice.<sup>54</sup> Some of these textiles may have served to dress cult images<sup>55</sup> or for the ritual dressing of a priestess. By contrast, offerings of a greater number of textiles may indicate a more practical use of these garments e.g. for the participants of a procession *vel sim.* (e.g. KN Oa 745). This may also apply to the textiles recorded within the mixed commodity tablets and distributed within the scope of state-organised sacrificial feasting (e.g. Un 6).

### c) Offerings of metal vessels

Besides the offerings of textiles, the precious metal vessels recorded on PY Tn 316 denote a more out-standing example of a manufactured product dedicated to gods. Amongst the 13 vessels which are offered to a number of deities three types can be distinguished (fig. 6): a simple cup or bowl without handles (\*213<sup>VAS</sup>), a cup

54. Further textual evidence on this cult practice may be provided by the term *to-no-e-ke-te-ri-jo* if the first part of the word is taken as \**ōpōvov* with the sense 'embroidered garment' cf. Probonas, *supra* n. 35, pp. 60f. J.L. García Ramón, «A New Indo-European -u- Present and a Suppletive Pair in Greek», in: A.J. Nussbaum (ed), *Verba docenti. Studies in Historical and Indo-European Linguistics presented to Jay H. Jasanoff*, Ann Arbor 2007, pp. 99f. However, there are various other suggestions for the interpretation of this term; for discussion, cf. *supra* n. 35.

55. Cf. M.-L. Nosch, «Approaches to Artemis in Bronze Age Greece», in: T. Fischer-Hansen & B. Poulsen (eds), *From Artemis to Diana. The Goddess of Man and Beast (= Acta Hyperborea 12)*, Copenhagen 2009, pp. 21-39. On this widespread cult practice in the historical period cf. I.B. Romano, «Early Greek Cult Images and Cult Practice», *Early Greek Cult*, pp. 127-134. However, she suggests that the clothing of cult images was introduced into Early Iron Age Greece from the Near East. In terms of the evidence outlined above, this seems less likely. On the assumption that xoana i.e. cult statues of wood were recipients of garments partly in order to conceal the crudely worked body of the statues cf. W.K. Pritchett, *Pausanias Periegetes*, Amsterdam 1998, pp. 246f.



with small handles identified either as goblet or as kylix (\*215<sup>VAS</sup>) and a chalice (\*216<sup>VAS</sup>), the latter being a typical ritual vessel in Crete which has also been discovered on the Greek mainland albeit rarely.<sup>56</sup> Since correlates in metal and stone for the chalice and the goblet date to LM/LH I–II it has been suggested that the vessels listed on Tn 316 were ceremonial heirlooms associated with drinking rituals used time and again.<sup>57</sup> However, the iconographic parallels seem to date considerably later than the preserved correlates. Thus, on the lines of clay specimens of these shapes from LH III B/C a production of the metal vessels listed on Tn 316 as late as LH III B is conceivable.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, the following consideration argues against the assumption of an annual transference of ceremonial heirlooms: if one suspects that the vessels were transferred from the palatial stores to the sanctuaries and deities in an annual offering ceremony, one has to face the problem of how these metal vessels explicitly designated as ‘gifts’ (*do-ra*/δῶρα) to the gods were to be returned to the palace i.e. how they were taken from the divine recipients. Therefore, I would prefer to consider these vessels as permanent donations to the deities listed, either as yearly offerings or in the context of an exceptional ceremony. Since we have no parallel records either from Pylos or any other site for such precious offerings linked with the dedications of human beings (whatever their precise function) the latter seems to be more likely.<sup>59</sup>

As to the nature of the ritual recorded on this document, the lexical items seem to point to a procession taking place at the address specified.<sup>60</sup> A pictorial translation of this written document may be seen in the scene on a fragmentary steatite vase from Knossos (fig. 7). There, two shallow bowls (resembling logogram \*215<sup>VAS</sup>) are carried by two young men who take part in a procession alongside a wall of what has been interpreted as a sanctuary due to the horns of consecration on it. Additional evidence for the use of gold and silver vessels within processions seems to be provided by procession frescoes from Knossos and

56. Hägg, *supra* n. 9, *Linear B*, p. 207.

57. T.G. Palaima, «Kn02 - Tn 316», *Floerant Studia Mycenaea*, p. 440.

58. The dating of the iconographic parallels of logogram \*216<sup>VAS</sup> mentioned by Palaima are highly disputed. The depiction of a two-handled goblet and the base and stem of a chalice on the ‘Campstool fresco’ seems not from LM IB: S. Immerwahr, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age*, University Park 1990, p. 179 suggests LM II/III, S. Hood, «Dating the Knossos Frescoes», in: L. Morgan (ed), *Aegean Wall Painting. A Tribute to Mark Cameron*, London 2005, p. 62 states: “It may not have been painted until after the beginning of LM III B.” In a similar way, the suggested date for the Tiryns ring (LH I) will not find unanimous agreement. As regards the clay specimens cf. P.A. Mountjoy, *Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery* II, Rahden 1999, pp. 1227-1229.

59. J.L. Melena, *Textos griegos micénicos comentados*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2001, pp. 68-70. However, the assumption that the palace of Pylos was capable of providing these precious offerings on a regular basis is certainly within the realms of possibility cf. T.G. Palaima, «The Last Days of the Pylos Polity», *Politeia*, p. 628. As regards the human beings, an interpretation as ἀπαρχαὶ ἀνθρώπων (cf. Arist. ap. Plut. Thes. 16,2) dedicated to the god’s service seems to me the most likely cf. Guthrie, *supra* n. 1, pp. 43f.

60. Palaima, *supra* n. 57, p. 451. J.L. García Ramón, «Sobre la tablilla PY Tn 316 y el pretendido presente radical *i-je-to*», *Atti Roma-Napoli*, pp. 261-268. I. Hajnal, «Mykenisch *i-je-to*, *i-je-ro* und Verwandtes», *Atti Roma-Napoli*, pp. 282f.

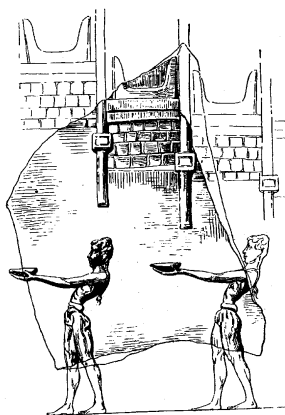


Fig. 7. Fragment of stone rhyton from Knossos (after *PofM* II.2 fig. 486).

Tiryns: among the objects being carried some vessels appear to be made of gold and silver as their yellow and blue colour suggests.<sup>61</sup>

Along with the dedications of textiles, the vessels listed on Tn 316 are the only evidence of manufactured products being offered to deities or at sanctuaries within the Linear B documents. However, further comparable dedications can be presupposed on the basis of iconographical and archaeological evidence such as the offering of animal and human figurines, the most widely attested and most characteristic element of cult practice in the Mycenaean age.<sup>62</sup>

### 3. Evidence for first fruits offerings

Another kind of ritual may be reflected by the Fs series from Knossos. Each tablet of this series records an issue of up to six commodities (HORD/probably barley, NI/figs, OLE/oil, FAR/most likely flour, VIN/wine and, in some cases, ME+RI/honey) in a more or less fixed order and in more or less fixed, modest quantities, though some discrepancies can be detected.<sup>63</sup> This series contains 18 tablets that were found next to the Fp(1) tablets in the Clay Chest. Their interpretation as documents referring to offerings relies mainly on the following points:

61. E. Mantzourani, «Vases and Vessels in Aegean Wall Painting», in: C. Morris (ed), *Klados. Essays in Honour of J.N. Coldstream*, London 1995, pp. 134-137. F. Blakolmer, «Minoisch-mykenische Prozessionsfresken: Überlegungen zu den dargestellten und den nicht dargestellten Gaben», in: E. Alram-Stern & G. Nightingale (eds), *Keimelion. Elitenbildung und elitärer Konsum von der mykenischen Palastzeit bis zur homerischen Epoche*, Wien 2007, p. 43.
62. A recapitulatory account on this practice is provided by C.W. Shelmerdine, «Review of Aegean Prehistory VI. The Palatial Bronze Age of Southern and Central Greek Mainland», *AJA* 101, 1997, p. 577.
63. On this series cf. R. Palmer, *Wine in the Mycenaean Palace Economy*, Liège 1994, pp. 125-142. Part of what follows is discussed in Weilhartner, *supra* n. 21, pp. 47-49.

- 1) In the Clay Chest only texts referring to offerings were discovered (Fs series, Fp(1) and Gg 10). They are associated with an administrative department located in the upper storey of the magazines in the West Wing of the palace. Its main function was the supervision of collections and distributions of raw materials for perfume manufacture and of disbursements for religious offerings.<sup>64</sup>
- 2) All the tablets of this series (except for Fs 3) are by hand 139. This hand bears a close resemblance to hand 140 who mainly wrote texts concerning offerings.<sup>65</sup> This affiliation of scribal hands may be explained by comparable fields of activity.
- 3) The introductory entries, though largely obscure, obviously name a recipient or a place-name. Only three or four of these recipients occur outside this series, all of them exclusively in a context suggesting religious offerings:

*pa-de* (Fs 8), or *pa-de-i*, recurs in Fp(1), Ga(3), and Ga 953[+]955 where the context makes it tempting to suggest a divine name. *da-da-re* (Fs 32), generally restored as *da-da-re[-jo-de]*, appears in the Fp(1) series as well and is generally believed to denote a shrine or sanctuary of Daidalos (\*Δαίδαλεϊον-δε). Although the interpretation of *me-na* (Fs 3) varies to a great extent,<sup>66</sup> both texts on which this term is also attested have clear religious connections: on E 842 (*di-wo, te-o-i*) and Gg(3) 717 (*pa-si-te-o-i, e-ne[-si-da-o-ne]*) *me-na* appears next to well-known theonyms. Finally, *ki-ri-jo-de* (Fs 26) may be restored on Ga 953[+]955 (?*ki-ri-jo-de*) where religious offerings to *pa-de-i*, *pa-si-te-o-i* and *pa-sa-ja* are recorded in 'the month of roses' (*wo-de-wi-jo-jo me-no*).

- 4) The nature, choice and the fairly small amounts of the commodities listed rule out an interpretation as monthly rations for palace-dependent workers. None of these foodstuffs except for barley and figs is ever allocated to lower status personnel. Additionally, all commodities on these tablets regularly recur in other offering contexts (esp. honey, oil, and flour).

Thus, an interpretation of this series as an allocation of foodstuffs to deities and sanctuaries is very likely. The names of recipients and addresses of the offerings seem to belong mainly to a prehellenic language.<sup>67</sup> Due to the lack of being mentioned elsewhere (apart from the three or four terms listed above) they seem to be designations of deities and sanctuaries that were primary of local importance. In some cases, at least, they may be related to archaeologically and iconographically proven rural shrines.<sup>68</sup>

64. E.D. Foster, «An Administrative Department at Knossos Concerned with Perfumery and Offerings», *Minos* 16, 1977, pp. 19-41. However, the assumption that the documents found in the Room of the Clay Chest had originally been stored on an upper floor has recently been criticized by Firth, *supra* n. 22, pp. 180-182.

65. *Scribes Knossos*, p. 84.

66. On this term cf. J.T. Killen, «The Language of Religious Texts: Some Fresh Thoughts on Old Problems», *Austin Colloquium* (in press).

67. Y. Duhoux, «Théonymes non grecs des séries Fp(1) - Fs de Cnossos et substrat préhellénique crétois», *Onomata* 13, 1989-1990, pp. 94-97.

68. St. Hiller, «Cretan Sanctuaries and Mycenaean Palatial Administration at Knossos», *Crète mycénienne*, pp. 205-212.

What was the actual ritual practice behind these allocations of luxurious food? Drawing upon the calorific value of each commodity Ruth Palmer suggests that the food in this series may represent palace maintenance of the priest or priestess of the shrine in proportions representing the ten days' worth of food.<sup>69</sup> She concludes that "the analysis of the proportions of the foodstuffs in the Fs tablets suggests that these items represented a meal or series of meals, as would have been eaten by relatively prosperous individuals". Nevertheless, it equally seems possible that the commodities listed served as direct donations to the gods i.e. that they were not intended for human consumption. Comparable groupings of such foodstuffs are attested in Classical literature (e.g. Soph. fr. 366. Paus. 8,42,11). Their offering in small quantities at sacred places corresponds to the cult practice of giving the first fruits of the harvest (*ἀπαρχή καρπῶν* cf. D.H. 2,74,4. Plu. *Thes.* 6,1), equally called 'Panspermia'. This kind of offering, along with the practice of libation, is considered amongst the oldest offerings in later Greek literature (Arist. *EN* 8,9,5). In their origin, at least, these offerings were not intended for human use.

The fragment of a relief scene on a Late Minoan rhyton may be seen as a pictographic translation of the actual ritual performance of this series (fig. 8). This fragment shows a person in the act of depositing a basket of fruits against the façade of a tripartite peak-sanctuary. A similar basket filled with fruits is depicted on the sarcophagus of Hagia Triada (fig. 9). Moreover, it has been noted that ritual tables of offerings with one or more circular depressions and ritual vases with small multiple cups would have been suitable for offerings of this type.<sup>70</sup>

Starting from the offerings of the first fruits, *ἀπαρχαί* could be spent of all kind of things.<sup>71</sup> According to the tablets, a small part of the contributions of raw materials delivered to the central palace for 'industrial' production is offered to deities. Among them are wool (e.g. KN Od(2)), coriander and *ku-pa-ro* (e.g. KN Ga 953[+J955, Ga(3) 456, 465). These commodities play an important role for two significant branches of Mycenaean palatial economy: the manufacture of perfumed oil and the fabrication of textiles.

A further possible example of this ritual practice may be recorded on KN Mc 4462 if the graph *a-re* on this tablet denotes the deity Ἄρης. *a-re* obviously appears as a recipient of one unit of the commodity \*150 which is perhaps an *ἀπαρχή* from the tribute of 61 pieces of \*150 recorded on this tablet.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4. Evidence for *sphagia*<sup>73</sup>

At the end of this paper I return to the sacrifice of animals. There can be no doubt that the various kinds of foodstuffs and animals listed in tablets referring to sacrificial banquets are intended for consumption by the human participants at

69. Palmer, *supra* n. 63, p. 134.

70. Guthrie, *supra* n. 1, pp. 37f.

71. Burkert, *supra* n. 28, pp. 115-119.

72. Killen, *supra* n. 66.

73. Part of what follows is discussed in Weilhartner, *supra* n. 17, pp. 813-823 in greater detail.

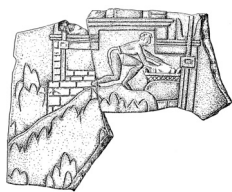


Fig. 8. Fragment of stone rhyton from Gypsades, Crete (after *ArchHom* III.V fig. 1).



Fig. 9. Sarcophagus from Hagia Triada, detail of side B (after Immerwahr, *supra* n. 58, pl. 51).

these banquets. In historical times the communal feasting was preceded by burnt animal sacrifice (θυσία or ‘Brandopfer’), involving the ceremonial slaughter of the animal and the ritual burning of bare bones representing the god’s portion. For many years the question if such a ritual did exist in Late Bronze Age Greece was amongst the most crucial ones.<sup>74</sup> This question seems now to be solved by the means of observation of burnt faunal remains taken as evidence for this kind of offering.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, in regard of the meaning of the lexical item ἐσχάρα attested in historical Greek, the syntagma *di-wo-nu-so-jo e-ka-ra* on tablet Ea 102+107 from Pylos seems to provide epigraphic evidence for the existence of a sacrificial hearth or altar of burnt offerings for a god.<sup>76</sup>

In the context of burnt animal sacrifice the gods received only some specific parts of the carcass which were burnt for their delectation. By contrast, there is a second main class of sacrifice where no part of the animal was consumed by humans, the ‘sacrifices not tasted’ (θυσίαι ἄγευστοι) i.e. ‘slaughter sacrifice’ (σφάγια or ‘Schlachtopfer’).<sup>77</sup> The central element of this class of sacrifice was the spilling of blood, and it was for the most part performed in chthonian rituals, funeral rites, in rituals of purification or at the occasion of swearing an oath. In addition, sphagia were performed in situations of emergency as on the battlefield, immediately before the battle, or before embarking on various exploits. After the ritual killing of the animal the essential point was the complete destruction of the victim: it could either be burnt wholly (holocaust sacrifice) or discarded in some other way (e.g. thrown into the sea or buried in the ground) without any part of it being eaten by humans. Clear examples in early Greek literature are the pledging of the oath associated with the duel between Menelaos and Paris (Hom. Il. 3.103-107, 276-301, 310-311) and the swearing of fidelity between Agamemnon and Achilles (Hom. Il. 19.249-268).

74. Cf. e.g. B. Bergquist, «The Archaeology of Sacrifice: Minoan-Mycenaean versus Greek», *Early Greek Cult*, pp. 21-34.

75. V. Isaakidou, P. Halstead, J. Davis & S. Stocker, «Burnt Animal Sacrifice at the Mycenaean ‘Palace of Nestor’, Pylos», *Antiquity* 76, 2002, pp. 86-92.

76. J.L. Melena, «24 Joins and Quasi-joins of Fragments in the Linear B Tablets from Pylos», *Minos* 35-36, 2000-2001, pp. 357-360. J. Weilhartner, «Neue Hinweise für die Existenz mykenischer Brandopfer», *JPR* 18, 2004, pp. 25-31.

77. P. Stengel, *Die griechischen Opferbräuche*, Leipzig und Berlin 1910, pp. 92-101.

Since the faunal remains from a LH III A–B architectural complex at Ayios Konstantinos associated with religious practices and interpreted as a sanctuary point to the throwing of whole carcasses of neonatal pigs into the fire the existence of this kind of ritual seems to be confirmed in Mycenaean times.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, one may ask if some of the animals recorded in religious contexts in the Linear B tablets are not destined for consumption at sacrificial banquets but to be given as σφάγια i.e. not for human benefit.

The sealings and tablets from Thebes, Knossos and Pylos that record animals and foodstuffs for sacrificial banquets usually do not mention the god in honour of whom the feasting took place. The only exception is a reference to Poseidon on PY Un 718 and Un 853, but this is probably due to the fact that the commodities listed on these tablets are provided in respect of holdings in the estate of this god.<sup>79</sup>

The lack of theonyms on these tablets contrasts strongly with the evidence of allocations of various foodstuffs to divine recipients or sanctuaries, e.g. the set Fp(1) from Knossos or the Fr series from Pylos. From this point of view, it seems surprising to find Poseidon and the female deity *pe-re*-\*82 on PY Un 6.1-4 as recipients of sacrificial animals.<sup>80</sup>

#### PY Un 6

- .1 po-se-da[-o-ne] BOŠ<sup>f</sup> [ ] OVIS<sup>f</sup> [ ] SUS+KA 1 SUS<sup>f</sup> 2
- .2 *angustum*
- .3 pe-re-\*82 BOŠ<sup>f</sup> 1 OVIS<sup>f</sup> 1 SUS+KA 1 SUS<sup>f</sup> 2
- .4 pe-re-\*82 BOŠ<sup>f</sup> 1 OVIS<sup>f</sup> 1 SUS+KA 1 SUS<sup>f</sup> 2
- .5 *angustum*
- .6 \*146 37 \*166+WE[ ] LANA 5
- .7 AREPA s 1 v 2[
- .8 BOS<sup>m</sup> 2 BOS<sup>f</sup> 2 OVIS<sup>s</sup>[

Of particular interest is the allocation of a single cow, a single ewe and a single boar next to two sows in separate entries to Poseidon and twice to *pe-re*-\*82. A comparable list of offerings is found in the Odyssey 11,130f. (= 23,277f.):

78. Y. Hamilakis & E. Konsolaki, «Pigs for the Gods: Burnt Animal Sacrifices as Embodied Rituals at a Mycenaean Sanctuary», *OJA* 23, 2004, p. 143. Equally, in Classical times very small pigs were frequently used in such rites cf. M.H. Jameson, «Sacrifice and Animal Husbandry in Classical Greece», in: C.R. Whittaker (ed), *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge 1988, p. 88.

79. P. de Fidio, *I dosmoi pili a Poseidon. Una terra sacra di età micenea*, Roma 1977, pp. 116f. J.T. Killen, «New Readings and Interpretations in the Pylos Tablets», *Florentia Studia Mycenaea*, p. 352.

80. The second part of the tablet has been linked by Killen, *supra* n. 79, pp. 350-353 to Un 853 due to the striking similarities between the commodities listed which appear in the same order and seem to have a relation of 1:2. Therefore, lines 6-8 list probably a 'normal' record of a collective contribution of mixed commodities for sacrificial feasting. The compilation of various transactions on one and the same tablet seems to be typical of hand 6 cf. Un 6v., Un 443.2-3, Un 853v.

ῥέξας ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι, | ἄρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα  
κάπρον

[M]ake handsome offerings to the lord Poseidon, a ram, and a bull, and a boar  
that mates with sows.

This kind of offering is called τρίττοια or τριττύες. In later Greek and Roman history it was performed primarily on the occasion of swearing an oath or in the context of the Roman *lustratio*.<sup>81</sup> In its origin this kind of offering belongs to the class of the θυσίαι ἄγευστοι, 'sacrifices not tasted':

Paus. 5,24,10: ἐπεὶ τοῖς γε ἀρχαιοτέροις ἐπὶ ἱερεῖα ἦν καθεστηκός, ἐφ' ᾧ τις  
ὄρκον ἐποιήσατο, μηδὲ ἐδώδιμον εἶναι τοῦτο ἔτι ἀνθρώπων.

[T]he ancient custom about victims was that no human being might eat of that  
on which an oath had been sworn.

Therefore, the suggestion seems to be plausible that the animals listed on lines 1-4 of tablet Un 6 are not destined for consumption during a sacrificial banquet but are given directly to Poseidon and the female deity. By contrast, the animals on line 8 are obviously part of a collective contribution of foodstuffs indicative of sacrificial feasting. If this interpretation is not misleading, this text may represent a peculiar parallel to the quotation of the Odyssey named above where the same juxtaposition of offerings for a sacrificial banquet and of offerings in which human use is forbidden seems to occur:

ῥέξας ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι, | ἄρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα  
κάπρον, | οἰκαδ' ἀποστείχειν ἔρδειν θ' ἱερᾶς ἑκατόμβας | ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,  
τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι, | πᾶσι μάλ' ἐξείης.

[M]ake handsome offerings to the lord Poseidon, a ram, and a bull, and a boar  
that mates with sows and depart for your home and offer sacred hecatombs to  
the immortal gods who hold broad heaven, to each one in due order.

After the atoning sacrifice to Poseidon, which should be given in order to reconcile the god after the blinding of his son Polyphemos, Odysseus is to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to the immortal gods on account of his return home.<sup>82</sup> Offerings made in connection with guilt are not used for consumption, whereas offerings made in connection with thanksgiving result in ceremonial banquets.

Possible further evidence for the recording of σφάγια within the tablets may be provided by tablet Cn 3 from Pylos.

81. Stengel, *supra* n. 77, pp. 82; 195f. L. Ziehen, «Τρίττοια», *RE* VII A 1, 1939, pp. 328-330. U.W. Scholz, «Suovitaurlia und Solitaurilia», *Philologus* 117, 1973, pp. 3-28. Burkert, *supra* n. 28, p. 381.

82. A. Heubeck & A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* II, Oxford 1989, p. 85.

**PY Cn 3**

- .1 jo-i-je-si , me-za-na ,
- .2 e-re-u-te-re , di-wi-je-we , qo-o ,
- .3 a<sub>2</sub>-ra-tu-a , o-ka-ra<sub>3</sub> , BOS 1
- .4 pi-ru-te , ku-re-we BOS 1
- .5 e-na-po-ro , i-wa-si-jo-ta , BOS 1
- .6 o-ru-ma-to , u-ru-pi-ja-jo , BOS 1
- .7 a<sub>2</sub>-ka-a<sub>2</sub>-ki-ri-ja-jo , u-ru-pi-ja-jo-jo , BOS 1

Despite the ongoing arguments concerning the correct syntax of the text and the correct interpretations of the lexical items, it is clear that single oxen (*qo-o*, BOS) are being either sent (*i-je-si* cf. ἵμι) or sacrificed (*i-je-si* cf. \*ἵμι/ἱερός) by groups of men, all of whom appear in the much discussed *o-ka* texts as among the contingents participating in military operations. According to John Killen the most likely explanation for the introductory line is as follows: thus they (i.e. the military contingents listed on lines 3-7 of the tablet) send for (the female divinity) *me-za-na* (i.e. the local goddess of Messene?) to *di-wi-je-u* (dative singular of a man's name), the *e-re-u-te-re*, oxen (for sacrifice).<sup>83</sup>

In general, it is assumed that the five oxen listed on this tablet are destined for consumption.<sup>84</sup> However, if the different structure of Cn 3 compared to the mixed commodity tablets and the lack of additional foodstuffs are indicative, another purpose for the recorded oxen seems to be possible. If the interpretation of *me-za-na* as a goddess proves correct, the reference to a divinity may hint at an offering where human consumption is forbidden as may be the case on PY Un 6.1-4. In respect of the military contingents recorded as donors, an assumed offering of these oxen as sphagia can be compared to rituals before military engagements described by ancient authors.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, this text may contain the ritual aspect of the military preparations recorded in the *o-ka* set. The following description of a ceremony in which the killing of the animal and rituals involving the blood of the animal play the essential role may serve as illustration:

A. Th. 42-48: ἄνδρες γὰρ ἑπτα, θούριοι λοχαγέται, | ταυροσφαγοῦντες ἐς  
μελάνδετον σάκος | καὶ θιγγάνοντες χερσὶ ταυρείου φόνου | Ἄρη τ', Ἐνυώ,  
καὶ φιλαίματον Φόβον | ὥρκωμότησαν ἢ πόλει κατασκαφᾶς | θέντες λαπάξειν  
ἄστρῳ Καδμείων βίᾳ | ἢ γῆν θανόντες τὴν δὲ φυράσειν φόνω.

Seven warriors, impetuous leaders of their companies shedding a bull's blood into a black-bound shield, and touching with their hands the victim's gore, have sworn an oath by Ares, by Enyo, and by bloodthirsty Phobos, that they will bring destruction on the city of the Cadmeans and ravage it by force of arms, or in death imbrue this land with their blood.

83. Killen, *supra* n. 66.

84. Palmer, *supra* n. 63, p. 77. Halstead, *supra* n. 11, p. 163. L.M. Bendall, «A Time for Offerings: Dedications of Perfumed Oil at Pylos Festivals», *A-na-qo-ta*, p. 8 n. 27.

85. Casabona, *supra* n. 28, pp. 180-189. Burkert, *supra* n. 28, pp. 106f. For a similar suggestion cf. *Interpretation*, p. 176.



One further example may be added. The heterogeneous nature of the animals and the small number of each type recorded on C 394 from Knossos point to the interpretation of provisions for a religious offering of some kind.

# **KN C 394**

.1 vac.[  
.2 qe-[  
.3 BOS<sup>m</sup> 1 sa OVIS<sup>m</sup>[  
.4 pa-ja-o-ne / pa-de[  
.5 ]vest.[  
→  
v.  
.1 ]no  
.2 ]sa OVIS<sup>m</sup> 1 sa CAP<sup>m</sup> 1[  
.3 ]we pa OVIS<sup>m</sup> 1 [  
.4 ] vest. ]

Along the lines of the two Pylian tablets Un 6.1-4 and Cn 3 this text may contain a reference to one or more divinities.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, animals are the only items listed on these tablets. In three entries of text KN C 394 we find the adjunct *sa* preceding an animal logogram, usually seen as phonetic abbreviation for the term *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja*. Despite some difficulties with the spelling this term has been transcribed as \*σφακτήρια, a derivative from the Greek verb σφάζω/to slaughter, and has been interpreted as a description of animals intended for sacrifice.<sup>87</sup> Since this description only qualifies some of the animals listed on this tablet rather than all of them Paul Halstead has proposed the meaning ‘reared for slaughter’.<sup>88</sup> However, this meaning does not match the meaning of σφάζω in historical Greek. Offerings of animals designated as σφάγια denote a ritual where the spilling of blood plays the essential role. Animals offered by this kind of ritual are not destined for consumption.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, according to the term σφάγιον in later Greek *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja* may have served as *terminus technicus* for the description of an animal dedicated to a divinity in which human use is forbidden. In respect of the name of the main religious centre close to the palace of Pylos which is called *pa-ki-ja-ne* and usually taken as ‘the place of animal slaughter’,<sup>90</sup> this kind of ritual may have been more important in Mycenaean Greece than has previously been considered.

86. E. Risch, «Die mykenischen Personennamen auf -e», *Tractata Mycenaea*, p. 291. J.T. Killen, «Thebes Sealings and Knossos Tablets», *Atti Roma-Napoli*, p. 80 and n. 22. Next to *pa-ja-o-ne* and *pa-de*, the other lexical items are too fragmentary to allow firm conclusions. However, due to the structure of the tablet *qe*-, *]no* and *]we* may denote (divine??) recipients of the animals recorded.

87. *Mémoires* II, p. 203 n. 18. Killen, *supra* n. 86, pp. 74f. 79f.

88. Halstead, *supra* n. 11, p. 161.

89. Casabona, *supra* n. 28, p. 187: “Σφάγιον est donc un terme technique des sacrifices où le sang joue le rôle essentiel, et qui ne sont normalement pas accompagnés de banquet.”

90. Palaima, *supra* n. 11, p. 225 cf. *DMic* II, s.v. *pa-ki-ja-ne*.